

COVID-19 Contact Tracing:

Contact Tracing in education and childcare settings



RP150-2 17th August 2021.

Further guidance will be developed by the devolved governments.

These are working documents and subject to change through the course of the testing programme rollout.

This document and other guidance available



This document provides an overview of the changes to the identification of close contacts following a positive PCR test for education and childcare settings from 19 July 2021.

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What are the changes to contact tracing from 19 July 2021?

- From 19 July, education and childcare settings (i.e. schools, colleges and nurseries) will no longer be asked to carry out routine contact tracing. From this point onwards, close contacts will be identified and contacted by NHS Test and Trace.
- As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will speak with the individual who has tested positive – or, depending on their age, their parent or legal guardian – to identify close contacts.
- Contacts within schools, colleges and nurseries will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as having close contact. NHS contact tracers will provide support on how to identify a close contact. **The setting will not routinely be contacted to provide details of close contacts.**
- Schools, colleges and nurseries may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts where there is a local outbreak, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.
- Symptomatic individuals, and those who record a positive test, will still need to isolate in line with current guidance.

What are the changes to self-isolation from 16 August 2021?

Self-isolation rules for close contacts in all settings are changing on 16 August.

- From 16 August close contacts who are fully vaccinated or those under 18 will not need to self-isolate
- All close contacts will be advised to take a PCR test – you should encourage anyone identified as a close contact to do this
- Individuals identified as close contacts will not need to self-isolate while they are awaiting the results of their test
- If the PCR result is positive, the individual must self-isolate and NHS Test and Trace will work with them to identify any close contacts
- 18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children and young people until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults

Contact Tracing Journey

In education and childcare settings

IMPORTANT: If, at any point, a student, pupil or staff member begins displaying symptoms they must [follow government guidelines](#), [order a PCR test](#) and self-isolate.



Signpost to other advice:

- Support if you're off work while self-isolating: <https://bit.ly/isolatesupport>
- If you're worried about your health, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/> or call 111.
- Remote learning advice: <https://bit.ly/covidhomelearning>
- Printable [action list](#) for schools/colleges for children with symptoms

Key Questions

1

Why are Test and Trace taking over contact tracing from education and childcare settings?

Education and childcare settings have done a brilliant job in identifying contacts over the course of the pandemic, but this is resource intensive. NHS Test & Trace already manage the contact tracing process for the rest of society and has developed expertise in supporting people to identify close contacts.

2

How will a child or young person know what is meant by ‘close contact’?

NHS Test & Trace will contact those who test positive – or their parent or legal guardian – to identify close contacts. They will ask a series of specific questions to help the individual understand what is meant by a close contact, making it easier for them to be identified. Contacts in an educational setting would only be traced if the positive case specifically identified an individual as having close, prolonged contact. The education or childcare setting would not be contacted to provide details of close contacts.

3

What does a close contact have to do?

From 16 August, anyone identified by NHS Test and Trace who is fully vaccinated or under-18 will be advised to get a PCR test. They do not need to isolate while awaiting the PCR result. Adults who are not fully vaccinated must self-isolate for 10 days from the date of last contact with the positive case. 18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children and young people until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults.

4

How will a setting know if a student, pupil or member of staff has tested positive?

Pupils, students and staff members who record a positive LFD or PCR test should let their setting know. Individuals who return a positive LFD result will need to self-isolate immediately and order a confirmatory PCR test. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days and is negative, the individual no longer needs to self-isolate. If the PCR result is positive, the individual must self-isolate and contact tracing will be conducted by NHS Test & Trace.

Where to find more information

Latest information on Contact Tracing is available at:

[Link to operational guidance](#)

[Link to Tracing FAQs](#)

This page will be regularly updated to include:

